



The complex topography in Western Montana and moist westerly winds play a role in a wide variance in the average annual snowfall amounts. The western slopes and mountain peaks usually receive the most snow due to the upslope enhancement. However, a change in flow pattern for a given storm can greatly alter the impact locations. Current snowpack information is available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's SNOTEL sites. Please visit the following website:

<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/mso/avalanche>

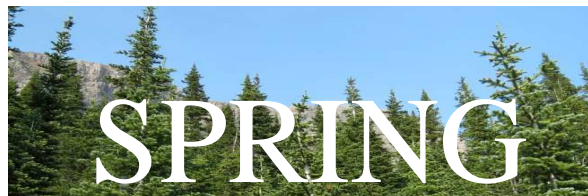
	Avg. High	Avg. Low	Snowfall
Missoula	32.1°F	17.7°F	43.9"
Kalispell	31.0°F	16.2°F	59.1"
Butte	30.3°F	6.1°F	58.2"
Seeley Lake	31.7°F	12.8°F	112.1"
Heron	33.1°F	21.6°F	83.1"
Trout Creek	35.5°F	21.7°F	56.2"
West Glacier	30.7°F	17.8°F	127.2"

Above are temperatures are Nov 15th-Feb 15th, 30-year averages taken from 1971-2000. Snowfall amounts are average annual totals for all seasons also from 1971-2000.

Annual snowfall totals (all seasons) for ski areas in Western Montana:

Blacktail Mountain: 250"
Whitefish Mountain: 300"
Turner Mountain: 250"
Lost Trail Powder Mountain: 300"
Lookout Pass: 400"
Discovery Ski Area: 210"
Montana Snowbowl: 300"

**Provided from the ski resorts used with permission.



Spring is typically the wettest time of year in Western Montana with May and June typically receiving the most precipitation. Coupled with the snowmelt runoff, this can result in river and stream flooding. Early season hiking and boating can be particularly hazardous with the high waters and strong currents. Hydrographs can be used to monitor the water levels in the major river levels in Western Montana as well as their predicted forecast levels. These hydrographs can be found at our website at:

<http://www.weather.gov/missoula/hydrology>

Temperatures can be highly variable day-to-day in Western Montana during spring. While high temperatures do average in the 60s in most valley locations, it is not uncommon to get a few cool, rainy days where highs remain only in the 40s. Accumulating snowfall, while prevalent in the higher elevations during spring, is still possible anywhere in Western Montana.

	Avg. High	Avg. Low	Precip.
Missoula	66.2°F	39.2°F	4.77"
Kalispell	64.2°F	38.4°F	5.55"
Butte	61.2°F	34.1°F	5.10"
Seeley Lake	63.1°F	34.6°F	4.98"
Hamilton	67.0°F	39.4°F	4.42"
Heron	65.7°F	38.0°F	7.65"
Trout Creek	68.5°F	37.4°F	6.24"
Eureka	68.2°F	40.0°F	4.88"
Thompson Falls	70.4°F	40.0°F	5.83"
West Glacier	63.4°F	37.3°F	7.62"

Apr 1st-Jun 30th, 30-year averages taken from 1971-2000.



Average rainfall amounts decline by July from their spring maximums. Less frequent rainfall events and increased evaporation due to the relatively drier air results in drying of the local vegetation. Depending upon how warm and dry the summer is, this can determine how volatile the vegetation is (which can fuel wildfires). A persistent subtropical ridge of high pressure over the area during the summer can increase the frequency and severity of wildfires. This persistent pattern has occurred during particularly bad wildfire years in the past.

Typical summers do have the aforementioned ridge of high pressure at times, but they are periodically broken up by cooler systems from the Northern Pacific. Western Montana can also experience large diurnal temperature swings on clear nights, especially in the valleys where radiational cooling is strongest. Ensure that if you are out that you are prepared to dress for both occasions.

	Avg. High	Avg. Low	Precip.
Missoula	83.4°F	49.7°F	2.23"
Kalispell	80.4°F	47.9°F	2.74"
Butte	79.5°F	44.8°F	2.82"
Seeley Lake	81.0°F	43.5°F	2.60"
Hamilton	83.2°F	49.1°F	2.14"
Heron	80.5°F	46.2°F	2.80"
Trout Creek	84.6°F	45.3°F	2.80"
West Glacier	78.7°F	47.6°F	3.72"

Jul 1st-Aug 31st, 30-year averages taken from 1971-2000.



The smoke has cleared, the trees turning vivid oranges and yellows...what is there not to like about the fall? The weather can be highly variable as some days can be sunny and mild whereas others can be cloudy, rainy and cold. Typically the number of cold and cloudy days increases throughout the fall. Seasonal precipitation averages in the wider valleys are not all that much higher in the fall than the summer, and in some areas they may average even less. In essence, the number of precipitation events increases, but it is trumped by the lighter amounts per event.

The higher mountain peaks in this area begin accumulating permanent snow in October. Snow in the valleys can vary greatly depending on the type of systems that push through, but mid-October to mid-November is usually the time to expect the first accumulating snowfall.

	Avg. High	Avg. Low	Precip.
Missoula	60.3°F	33.9°F	2.28"
Kalispell	58.0°F	32.1°F	2.81"
Butte	57.9°F	28.4°F	2.15"
Seeley Lake	59.2°F	30.8°F	3.46"
Hamilton	62.0°F	34.0°F	2.34"
Heron	58.3°F	34.7°F	6.09"
Trout Creek	62.8°F	34.8°F	5.19"
Eureka	60.4°F	35.0°F	2.78"
Thompson Falls	63.8°F	36.5°F	4.10"
West Glacier	55.9°F	33.5°F	5.42"

Sep 1st-Nov 15th, 30-year averages taken from 1971-2000.

Helpful Links

Our local climate webpage includes a variety of information free for your use including archived weather data from our automated stations and volunteer observers, summaries of past weather events, links to climate prediction forecasts and additional climate statistics of the Western Montana area. This website can be found at:

<http://www.weather.gov/climate/?wfo=mso>

National Climatic Data Center

Nationally archived data system which can be used for official purposes or studies.

<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/>

The National Weather Service, located in Missoula, MT, is one of 122 offices across the country. We are primarily responsible for issuing watches and warnings for weather and flooding situations which may threaten lives and property. We also provide weather forecasts to the public and specialized groups throughout Western Montana and North Central Idaho. You may access our weather, water and climate products at our website located at:

<http://www.weather.gov/missoula>

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Western Montana Climate

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